6: Tomasic E-4 (1947-1948) 1953 RFI Great Russia RFI

There will be no place to run and hide oneself; it will be woe and pain without comfort, particularly for the repenting sinners. They will see the anger of God, full of rage and wrath, bearing the woe of revenge.[39]

Also the folk religious poetry began to emphasize the gloomy aspects of *post-mortem* life, especially that of the *Strashny Sud*—The Terrible Judgment. It was perhaps in such conditions that Destiny, together with the Truth, became dissociated from the idea of a supreme Justice that reigned everywhere and came to be looked upon as being subject to the caprice of arbitrary and uncontrollable forces that now dominated the Universe.

Such circumstances might have meant quick disintegration of this society, not unlike the rapid dissolution of the Turco-Mongol empires, had it not been for agents that favored the stabilization and the perpetuation of this social system in spite of its internal weaknesses. One of the most important instruments in this process of social consolidation was the Byzantine Church.

5
THE BYZANTINE CHURCH AND MUSCOVITE MILITARY THEOCRACY

I

FOLLOWING the traditions established by the Roman Caesars, the Emperor of Byzantium (Basileus) was looked upon as the supreme war-lord, the sole legislator, and the chief justice, as well as the universal ruler. Therefore, the Church, which was subjected to the absolute and autocratic will of the Emperor, developed a religious ideology in accordance with the dominant political philosophy and practices of the Empire.

The Emperor assumed the duty of defending the Church, combating heresy, and spreading Orthodox faith throughout all the globe. In return, God had promised him universal dominion

7: Lineva B-5 (no date)1893 RFl Great Russia RFl

called the *svat*. It is his business to praise up the person he represents and to obtain easy conditions. This part is sometimes taken by an old and experienced relation of the groom. 584

As there is but little time to arrange a marriage, the two *svats*, on starting out, receive the names of several families in which to enquire for brides, and therefore it is a busy week in the village—many *svats* going about from house to house. They are dressed in holiday attire, which is a sufficient sign of their mission (these visits taking place mostly in the evenings during the week). The *svat* carries with him a quart of brandy, that he may offer the necessary treat during the negotiations.

The two *svats* slowly and solemnly enter the house, where they find the girl dressed up in her best, sitting at the table with her father and mother. When a prospective bride sees them she goes away and hides. The negotiations are opened and conducted with a great deal of ceremony, as the peasants are great sticklers for propriety and the girl would be highly offended if any formality were omitted, or the wedding celebrated with a particle less pomp than the family can afford. After the first courtesies, the *svats* are asked to sit down at the head of the room by the table. They refuse, upon one pretext or another, (as being cold, etc.,) and try to get a place under the middle beam of the ceiling, that being a good omen. [777] Their attire, ceremonious behavior, etc., show plainly on what business they have come, and the actions and answers of the people of the house show them, in turn, whether or not they are welcome and what decision they may expect. Thus both sides proceed very cautiously.

The business opens with a general conversation about the weather, the price of wheat, etc. After a while the *svat* mentions casually, that he has heard the people of the house have a commodity to sell, and that he has a buyer for it, (this feature is [583] quite plainly a relic of the ancient form of marriage by purchase). If the father says there is a mistake, that he did, indeed, have a commodity, but it is sold (which means that the girl has already been promised), then the *svats* take their departure in a little while and go to the next house on the list. If an excuse is